THE CHRISTIANS COMBAT

OR, HIS

True Spiritual Warfare.

BRITISH MUSEUM 7 NOV 61

Christ over-Love, that cannot be you'l say,
But *Christ* above all others *Love* you may.

THE Christians COMBAT: OR, HIS *True Spiritual Warfare*;

Wherein is laid down the Nature, Power, and cunning Deceit of Satan, the great enemy of our Salvation.

With the means whereby every good Christian may withstand his dreadful assaults.

By C. L. *late Preacher of Gods Word in the City of London.*

Ephes. 6. 11. *Put on the whole armour of Gods Word, that ye may be able to stand against the assaults of the devil.*

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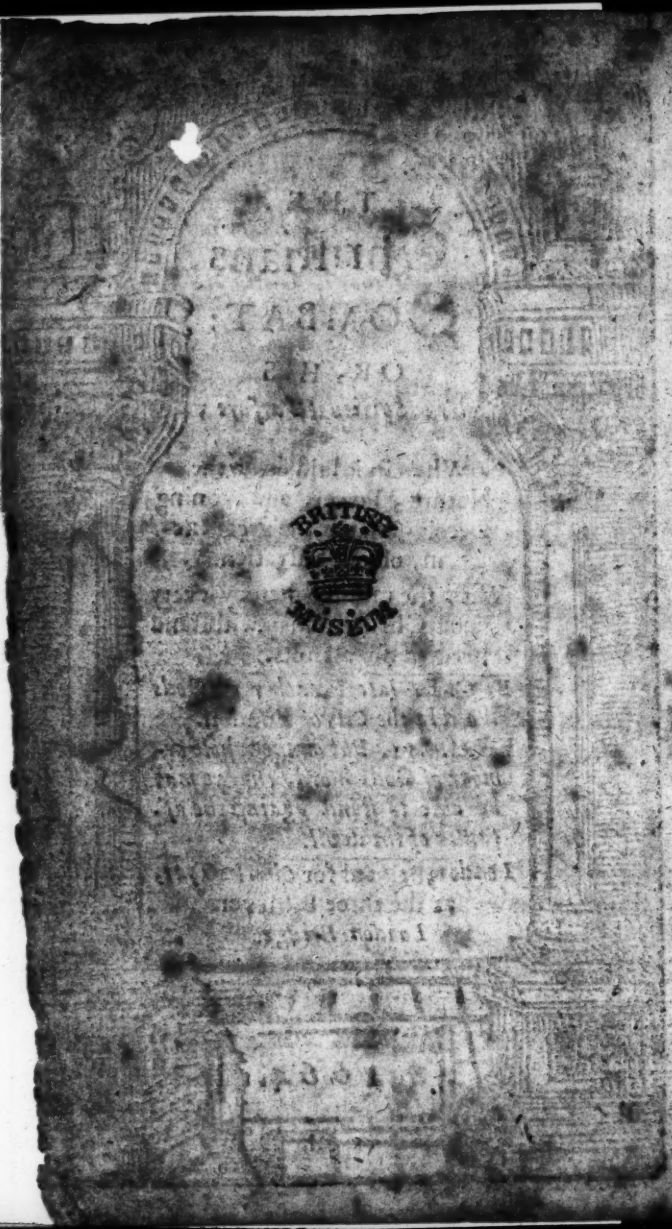
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THE CHRISTIANS COMBAT.

Ephesians 5. 13, 14, 15, 16, 17.

Wherefore take unto you the whole Armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all to stand.

Stand therefore, having your Loyns girt about you with truth, and having on the Brestplate of righteousnes, and your feet shod with the preparation of the Gospel of Peace.

Above all things take the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked.

And take the Helmet of Salvation, and the Sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.

BEloved Christians, the Apostle Saint Paul having shewn the mystery of our Salvation and the causes thereof; for the confirmation of our faith in the three first Chapters of his Epistle

the Apostles, and after him in the other chapters having set down divers duties, both generally belonging to all Christians: and also particularly appertaining to men of sundry conditions, that he might move them to repentance and newness of life; in the next place like the Lords sentinel, doth discover and give us warning of the approach of mighty enemies; willing us to arm our selves in all points in our own defence, and courageously to stand under the Standard of Christ Jesus, that we may be continually in readiness to indure the incounter; also he giveth us to understand that as soon as we seek for assurance of Salvation in Christ, and indeavour to serve the Lord in a holy and Christian life, we are to prepare our selves for a Combat, unless we would suddenly be surprized: for the spiritual enemies of our Salvation arm themselves against us as soon as we have given our names to God; and taken upon us the profession and practice of Christianity. No sooner had Abel offered a sacrifice of sweet smelling savour unto God, but Satan stirreth up Cain to become his murther, Gen. 4. Whilst Moses was content to be reputed the Son of Pharaohs daughter, he injoyed all prosperity; but as soon as he joyned himself to Gods people and

Church,

Church, Pharaoh seeketh his life, whilst Paul persecuted the Church of God, Satan did not so much trouble him, either outwardly in body, or inwardly in mind, but no sooner was he truly converted to the Faith, and preached the Gospel, but presently he setteth his wicked Imps at work to take away his life; which the Lord not permitting, he moveth them to persecute him by imprisoning him, whipping and stoning him, and not content with these outward afflictions, he sendeth his messengers to buffet him, that he might be no lesse vexed inwardly in mind, then outwardly in body, 2 Cor. 12.

Yea he spared not our Saviour Christ himself, but as soon as he began to shew himself to be the Son of God and Redeemer of mankind, in performing the duties of his calling, then especially he bendeth all his force against him, he tempteth and assaulteth him forty daies together, and taking the foil himself, he stirreth up his wicked instruments to persecute him, and at length to take away his life, Matth. 4.

Whosoever therefore resolves to be Gods servant, must make account to be his Souldier also, and whilst with Nehemiahs followers, with one hand they perform the works of their callings and Christianity, the

must with the other hand hold their weapons to repel their spiritual enemies, who continually labour to hinder the Lords buildings: for no sooner do we become friends to God, but presently Satan assaulteth us as his enemies, no sooner do we receive the Lords press money, and set foot into his Camp, but Satan advanceth against us his Flaggs of defiance, labouring both by secret treachery, & outward force, to supplant and overcome us.

Here therefore is instruction for secure worldlings, and consolation and incouragement for Gods Children; worldly men instead of fighting the Lords battels, spend their time in Chambering and wantonness, in Lusts and uncleanness, in covetousness, in idleness; as though there were no enemy to assault them, and as if Satan were some mere Lamb, and not a roaring Lion ready to devour them.

But now some may ask why God suffereth his Servants to be tempted, why, I answer: First it is for his own glory. And secondly, for the manifesting of his spiritual graces in them; and as the Lord suffereth Satan and his Imps to try his Children for his own glory, so also it is for their spiritual and everlasting good.

For first, Hereby he chastiseth them for

their

their sins past, and recalleth them to their remembrance, that so they may truly repent of them; and this Job speaks of in Job verse 26. Thou writest (saith he) bitter things against me, and makest me to possess the iniquities of my youth.

Secondly, he manifesteth unto us our secret and hidden sins, which the dim eye of our judgement would not discern, if the light were not quickned with this sharp letter of temptation; for so long as we live in peace, our secure consciences never summon us to the bar of Gods Judgement seat, but when we are roused up by temptation, we come to a more strict examination of our selves: and search what secret sins lie lurking in the hidden corners of our hearts, that so we may repent of them, and make our peace with God; without whose assistance we can have no hope to stand in the hour of temptation.

Thirdly, The Lord hereby prevents our sins to come, for when we have experience, that the most sharp weapons which Satan useth to inflict deep wounds in our consciences, this will make us more carefully to abstain from them, lest thereby we strengthen him for our own overthrow.

Fourthly, The Lord suffereth Satan

assault us, that we may hereby come to a sight of our own weakness and infirmities, when we have received many foils, and learn to relie upon his help and assistance in all our dangers: for so proud we are by nature, that before we come to fight, we think we can repel the strongest assaults, & overcome all enemies which oppose themselves against us by their own power, but when we see our selves vanquished by every small temptation, we learn to have a more humble conceit of our own ability and depend wholly upon the Lord, as you may see in Deut. 8. 2. and 13. 3.

Fifthly, The Lord permitteth Satan continually to assault us with temptations, to the end we may continually buckle unto us the whole armour of God, that we may be ready for the Battel.

Lastly, By this conflict the Lord strengtheneth and increaseth all his graces in us, for as by exercise the strength of the body is preserved and augmented, and in short time decayeth through idleness and sloth; so the gifts of Gods Spirit, Faith, Hope, Patience, and the rest, languish in us, if they be not exercised with temptations.

For Tribulation bringeth forth Patience, and Patience Experience, and Experience Hope, and hope maketh not ashamed, as you may read in Rom. 5. 3, 4, 5.

I

I shall now proceed to give you some arguments or reasons to incourage us to enter into the battel to fight against the spiritual enemies of our Salvation.

1 Reas. The first reason that I shall give you may be drawn from the justness of our cause, the war is just; therefore proceed we may with boldness, for though Souldiers be never so strong and well furnished, yet if their consciences tell them they fight in a bad quarrel, it will much abate their courage, and make them cowardly and timerous: but our cause is most just, and our war most lawful; for God who is justice it self hath proclaimed it by his Heraulds the Apostles, Ephes. 6. 10. Finally my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might, *James* 4. 7. Resist the devil and he will flie from you, 1 *Pet.* 5. 8. Be Sober, be Vigilant, for your adversary the devil, as a roaring Lion walketh about seeking whom he may devour, *ver.* 9. whom resist stedfast in the faith.

2 Reas. The cause of our war is of great weight: as namely, for the glory of God and our own Salvation, for in all Satans skirmishes he seeketh to impeach Gods glory, with false imputations, and to bring us to utter destruction, and this may appear with the first conflict of his with our Mother Eve, Gen.

Gen. 3. 4. 5. where he accuseth God of a lie, who is truth it self, and of impotency and envious disdain, saying that the cause why he did forbid them to eat of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, was not (as he had said) because they should die, but because he knew that when they should eat thereof their eyes should be opened, and they should be as Gods knowing good and evil.

1. Where he seeketh to dim the beams of Gods glory, by accusing him of a lie, and to perswade them that he was not Omnipotent, seeing that he was able to hinder them from being Gods, if they tasted of this fruit: lastly, that he forbid them to eat thereof, because he envied them so glorious an estate.

2. He laboreth to destroy our first Parents both body and soul, by tempting them to disobedience and transgression of Gods commandment, and therefore our Saviour Christ doth fitly joyn those two together in the 8 of John 44. saying, That he was a liar, and a man-slayer from the beginning. A liar, in that he falsely accused God of a lie; a Man-slayer, because he did it to this end, that he might murther our first Parents, and all their posterity both body and soul.

2. Real. The second reason to move us to undertake this fight, is the profit which will accrew

accrew unto us thereby: for no sooner can we enter into the field to fight against these enemies, but presently we shall have peace with God: but if we betray our trust, that is, Gods cause, to Satan, and our souls to sin, well may we be lulled asleep in carnal security, but we shall never injoy this peace with God, and peace of conscience, For there is no peace saith my God unto the wicked, *Esa.* 57. But if we fight against these enemies and valiantly overcome, the Lord hath promised to give us to eat of the Tree of Life, which is in Paradice, and the manna that is hid, and that he will write our names in the Book of Life, Rev. 2. 3.

3. Reas. The third reason to move us to this fight, is the honor which will accompany this victory: if earthly souldiers will purchase honor with the loss of life, which is nothing else but the commendation of the Prince, or applause of the vain people; what hazard should we undergo in fighting the spiritual Combat, seeing our grand Captain the Lord of Hosts, and infinite multitude of blessed Angels look upon us, and behold our Combat, whose praise and approbation is our chief felicity; what peril should we fear to obtain a Crown of glory which is promised to all that overcome, and to become heirs apparent to Gods Kingdome? 4. If

4. Reas. The fourth reason to perswade us, is the necessity of undertaking this Combat; there is no man so cowardly that will not fight when there is no hope in flight, no mercy to be expected in the enemy, no outrage and cruelty which will not be committed; but such is our enemy that we cannot possibly flye from him, his malice is unreconcileable, his cruelty is outragious, for he fighteth not against us, to the end he may attain soveraignty alone, abridge us of our liberty, spoil us of our goods, but he aimeth at our death destruction both of body and soul. The Apostle James in his Epistle, 1 chapter the 12 verse, pronounceth them blessed that indure temptation, for when by tryal he shall be found approved, he shall receive a crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him.

Lastly, We may be incouraged to this fight, by certain hope of victory, for we fight under the Standard of Christ Jesus, who alone is mightier then all our enemies that assault us, Ephes. 6. 12. Our Saviour hath spoiled principalities and powers, and hath made a shew of them openly, and hath triumphed over them upon the Crosse.

Let us not therefore fear to fight against beaten and conquered enemies, for every one

one shall be a conqueror, that desires the conquest; for if we will be the Lords Souldiers, he will not suffer us to be so much disgraced, as to let us be overcome by his mortal enemies. Having given you the reasons which may incourage us to fight this Combat, I shall now come to the spiritual warfare it self; and shall endeavour to lay before you the malice of our great adversary the Devil: therefore in an enemy who proclaimeth war against us, we are to consider two things, First, his will; Secondly his power; If he have will to hurt us and no power, he is not to be regarded; if power, and no irreconcileable malice, he is not so much to be feared; but if his power be great, and his will malicious, it is time then for us to look about us, and muster up all our forces, that we may be ready to endure the encounter.

1. First therefore, touching the will of our grand enemy the Devil, if we consider of it aright, we shall find him to be very maliciously bent against us, so that there is no hope of reconciliation with him, though we could be content to make a truce or a honourable peace with Gods and our enemy; Satans malice to mankind is endless, the cause thereof, is namely the love and favour of God to the faithful (whose estate he

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is a tempter to tempt us to sin, and not onely so, but he is an accuser after that we have sinned, requiring of God that he will execute his justice upon offenders, who have deserved punishment: of this there needs no further proof then his own testimony, as we may read in Job 1. 7.

And as he is an accuser, so he is also a slanderer, thus wrongfully did he slander Job, that he served God for advantage, because he preserved and blessed all he had, affirming that if he would take away his goods and afflict his body, he would blaspheme him to his face, Job 1. 10.

Neither is Satan onely a slanderer, but he is also an executioner or hangman, ready with all cruelty to inflict the punishment the which the Lord adjudgeth unto us, as we may see in the History of Job: This shews us the extream malice of our enemy; he is the father and author of all malice and envy, who laboreth night and day to dishonor God, and work our destruction. Therefore let us oppose against Satans malice, Christian resolution, stedfastly purposing to continue our fight in resisting Satan to our lives ends, how troublesome so ever it seemeth to flesh and blood: for what more honourable death is there then to die in fighting the Lords bat-

tels: what death more profitable, seeing by dying we shall overcome and obtain a final victory over all our enemies, and receive the crown of Glory, everlasting happiness promised to all those who fight valiantly in this Combat unto the end.

I might inlarge very much in shewing you the power and strength of Satan our great enemy.

First, If you consider it in himself.

Secondly, If we consider the great aid he hath in the world.

And thirdly, If we consider our own flesh how frail that is, and what a great help and advantage it is to Satan; but I shall wave it at present, and shall come to the description of the spiritual armour which the text encourageth every Christian to be armed withal.

1. The Apostle St. Paul describeth the quality, and as it were the metal of our armour, in which respect he telleth us we must put on the armour of God, which is spiritual, and that our weapons we fight withal must not be carnal, for our enemy is spiritual, we wrestle against Principalities, and Powers. Neither is it enough that we put on one piece of the armour, and like young Souldiers leave off the rest for lightness, we

must not put on the Helmet of salvation, and leave off the Brestplate of righteousnes, nor take unto us the girdle of Truth, & Shield of Faith, and cast away from us the sword of the Spirit, but we are to put on the whole armour of God, like valiant souldiers, who mean indeed to stand to it; we are to arme our selves in all points in compleat armour of proof, which will keep us from fleeing, and our enemies from overcoming.

And that we may be the rather stirred up with all care and diligence to provide, and buckle fast to us the armour which he after describeth: he sheweth the necessity thereof, by describing the dangerousnes of our enemies, who being not flesh and blood, but Principalities, Powers, Princes of darknes in this world, and spiritual wickednesses, which are in high places, cannot possibly be resisted by our own strength, and means, and therefore for this cause he willeth us to take upon us the whole armour of God, that we may be able to resist in the evil day, that is, the time of temptation, which is therefore called the evil day; partly because therein Satan tempteth us unto evil, and partly because it is a time of trouble, adversity, and affliction, when Satan sifteth us with his temptations; and thus the evil

day is taken in Psal. 41. 1. The Lord will deliver him in the evil day, that is, in the time of trouble: and thus also it is used in Ephes. 5. 16. Redeeming the time, because the dayes are evil, that is, full of troubles and afflictions, or the time of adversity.

I shall now come to the particular parts of our Christian armour, and shall first begin with the girdle of truth: and shew you what we are to understand by it: the word Girdle it self, signifieth a broad studded Belt, used in wars, in ancient times, wherewith the joynts of the Brest plate, and that armour which defended the belly, and loins, and thighs were covered, and by this truth is resembled; whereby some understand the truth of Religion, and of the Doctrine which we profess; others understand hereby truth and uprightnes of heart, or the integrity of a good conscience, whereby we perform all duties belonging unto God, and our neighbor, in simplicity, without all hypocrisie, or dissimulation; but I think we may take it in both senses, seing the Apostle doth set down under these metaphorical words, the chief vertues and graces, wherewith we are to arm our selves against our spiritual enemies.

1. First therefore here is required truth

of our Religion, we profess.

2. And secondly, that we profess it truely, and with upright and simple hearts.

1. For the first, that our Religion must be grounded on Gods truth, it is the foundation upon which all other duties to God or man are to be built, for if they be not grounded on Gods truth, but devised by mans brain, they are but human traditions, which the Lord will not accept, neither is it to any purpose, that we shew our selves earnest, and forward in religion, unless it be true and agreeable to Gods holy word.

2. Tis not sufficient that we profess the truth, but it must be done in truth and simplicity of heart; for how glorious soever our profession of the true religion is before men, yet it is abominable in the eyes of God, if it be not in truth, and from an upright heart, Joshua 24.14. Fear the Lord, and serve him in uprightness, and in truth which if we perform in our serving of God; it will be acceptable in his sight, though performed in great weakness, and mingled with many imperfections; let us therfore with our Saviour, pray unto God that we may be sanctified with his truth, that not onely whatsoever we do, may be grounded on Gods truth, but that we may do it in truth and uprightness of heart.

I come now to the second part of our armour, which is the breast-plate of righteousness, and the excellency thereof; by which we are to understand a good conscience, true sanctification, a godly life, which also we are to put on according to the example of our grand Captain Christ Jesus, Isa. 59. 17. He put on righteousness as a breast plate, and an helmet of salvation upon his head. Then shall not Satans darts pierce us, so long as we are armed with a good conscience, and a godly and innocent life, so long as our hearts and breasts are armed with righteousness, though other members fall into sin, our wounds shall not be mortal. True it is that Saints do receive wounds and foils, when as Satan hath drawn them to commit sin, but they are not wounded at the heart, because they do not sin with full consent of the will, for they allow not that which they do, neither do that which they would, but what they hate: and they delight in the law of God, in the inner man, when the flesh leadeth them captive to the law of sin, Rom. 7. 15.

And hence it is that St. Paul saith, he did not transgress the law of God, but sin that dwelleth in him, Rom. 7. 17. And the Apostle St. John affirmeth, that they who are born of God sin not, 1 John 3. 9. And that they who

who are in Christ sin not, and that whosoever sinneth is of the Devil, verse 6 and 8. Not that Gods Children are exempted from all sin, but because they sin not with the full consent and swinge of their will, and when they do fall, their hearts are defended with the brest-plate of righteousnes, that is, with an holy desire, and endeavoring to serve God. David a man after Gods own heart, may be a notable example hereof, for even after he was indued with the knowledge of the truth, and had this godly endeavour of serving God, he notwithstanding fell grievously many times, and was wounded often with Satans darts, but his wounds were not mortal, neither did they pierce the heart, because he was armed with the brest-plate of righteousnes.

Come we now to a third part of our Christian armour, which is this, that we have our feet shod with the preparation of the Gospel of peace: that is, we must be entertain'd with the knowledge of the Gospel of peace: for it is therefore called the Gospel of peace, because it bringeth peace to our souls; not onely as it is the embassage of God, whereby we being reconciled unto God, have peace with him, from the assurance whereof we have peace of conscience,

but also, because if we be armed therewith, we shall obtain a final victory over our spiritual enemies after which shall follow everlasting peace, which shall not so much as be disturbed with the attempts of any enemies.

It is not sufficient that we know and believe the Gospel of peace, unless we be always prepared to make confession and profession thereof, though thereby we incur worldly shame, losses, afflictions and persecutions: and this the Apostle signifieth by telling us that our feet must be shod with the preparation of the Gospel of peace, that is, as those who are well shod, are ready to go through rough and unpleasant waies, so those that are indued with the knowledge of the Gospel must always be in readiness to make profession thereof, in the midst of affliction and persecution: for as with the heart man believeth unto righteousness, so with the mouth he must confess unto Salvation, *Rom.* 10. 10.

But now if we lay aside this armour, we shall be as unfit to travel in the afflicted way which leadeth to Gods Kingdom, as those souldiers who are bare-foot, are fit to march through waies that are full of briars and thorns.

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We come now to the fourth piece of Christian armour, which the Apostle exhorteth us to put on, which is the shield of faith: which part above all other parts is most necessary: because how weak soever we be in our self, it doth defend and protect us against all temptations of Satan. For he that putteth on faith, putteth on Jesus Christ also, it being a property inseparable of faith, to apply unto us Christ Jesus, and all his benefits; that is, his merits, and righteousnesse, and everlasting life it self.

Let us therefore take unto us the shield of faith, that we may also put on the Lord Jesus Christ, as the Apostle exhorteth us, Rom. 13. 14. For having him, we shall want nothing which may either defend our selves, or offend our enemies: the Lord himself will be our shield and buckler, and therefore it will be impossible for our foes to prevail against us.

Again, let us further consider the vertue and necessity of this shield of faith, the vertue whereof appeareth by its repelling the fiery darts of Satan: the Apostle saith, that thereby we may quench his fiery darts, alluding to the custome of Souldiers in ancient time, who maliciously poysoned their darts,

darts, whereby the bodies of those that they wounded, were so inflamed that they could hardly be cured or eased of their raging and burning pain; and such darts are all Satans temptations, whereby we are wounded with sin; for if they be not repelled and quenched with the shield of faith, they will inflame our lusts to sin, and one sin will inflame our hearts to another, till there be kindled in us a world of wickedness.

This we may see in the example of David, who after that he gave himself to idleness and sloth, and so was pierced with one of Satans fiery darts, it presently inflamed his heart to commit adultery, and having given place to that, he was provoked to murther.

Therefore it behoveth us to take unto us the shield of faith, whereby we may quench these fiery darts, but why doth the Apostle use this unproper speech, seeing the shield of faith doth not quench, but repel the darts that beat upon it?

I answer partly to shew the nature of our enemies temptations; namely, that they be fiery, mortal, raging, and pernicious, and partly to set forth a double vertue of faith.

For first thereby we repel and beat back his

his temptations, and so resist him stedfast in the faith, 1 Pet. 5.9.

Secondly, if Satans darts have pierced and wounded us, faith also doth coil the scalding heat of sin, by applying unto us the precious balm of Christs blood; so that our wounds are not mortal unto us.

The first of these vertues is signified hereby, in that he calleth faith a shield which repelleth Satans temptations, as the shield doth the darts that are cast against it.

The second by the word (quenching) namely, as water quencheth the fire, so faith quencheth the fiery darts of Satans temptations.

I proceed now to the fifth part of our Christian armour, which is the helmet of Salvation, which is so called, because it bringeth Salvation to them that wear it, for we are saved by hope, as it is in Rom. 8. 24. which we are to understand by the helmet of Salvation, as it appeareth in 1 Thes. 5. 8. where he exhorteth us to put on the hope of Salvation for an helmet.

As no man in his right wits, would sell his certain interest unto a goodly inheritance, for a bright shining counter; so much less will any man who is not stark-mad, sell his assured hope of the eternal kingdome of glo-

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ry, by yielding himself the slave of sin and Satan, to purchase for the present, the worlds counterfeit shining excellencies, which are in truth, but mutable, or at least momentary vanities.

And though he assault us on the one side, as he did St. Paul, with afflictions and persecutions; yet we will with him for the hope of Israel, be content to be bound in the chains of misery and affliction, for the heaviest cross will seem tolerable, yea an easie yoke, and a light burthen to those who do expect and hope for a far more excellent and eternal weight of glory.

Now therefore if we do not put on this helmet, we shall not dare to lift up our heads in the day of battel; for as those who are incouraged with hope of victory, and the spoil ensuing, do fight valiantly, so those who are quite forsaken of hope, do forsake also the field, and cast down their armour and weapons, and do either run away, or cowardly yield unto the enemy.

And so much for the defensive armour which we must put on, that which follows is both defensive, and offensive, fit to defend our selves and repel and foil the enemy: the first is the sword of the Spirit, the word of God, this the Apostle cals the sword of the Spirit;

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because it is a spiritual and not a carnal weapon, which the spirit of God hath as it were tempered, made, sharpened, and put into our hands, to repel all our spiritual enemies whensoever they assault us.

Now we are taught to imitate our grand Captain the Lord Jesus Christ, who though he were able to have confuted Satan by other arguments, or to have confounded him by his power: yet as he suffered himself to be tempted in all things like unto us, so he used the same weapons which he hath appointed us to use in this spiritual Combat of temptation, to the end that we might be taught how to handle them, having his example for imitation, and also may conceive assured hope of victory, considering that our Captain subdued Satan with the self same weapons.

Whensoever therefore we are assaulted by Satan, let us draw out the sword of the spirit, that we may defend our selves, and give him the foil, as being the most fit weapon for the purpose: and seeing this sword is so excellent, let us highly esteem of it, and manfully use it whensoever Satan doth assault us, and tempt us to commit sin.

As for example, when he enticeth us to commit sin, and extenuates it, as though

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it were but a may-game and a trick of youth, which God regardeth not: let us draw out the sword of the spirit, saying that all they are accursed who continue not in all that is written in that book of the Law to do it, Gal. 3. 10. They who live according to the flesh cannot please God. Rom. 8. 8. That the burthen of sin cannot be light, seeing it pressed out of Christ himself, a bloody sweat.

On the other side, if he aggravate the hainousness of our sins, to the end he may draw us unto despair of Gods mercies, let us say it is written, I will not the death of a sinner (saith the Lord) but that he repent and live, *Ezek.* 18. 23. And that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners, 1 *Tim.* 1. 15.

And that he came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance, Matth. 9. 13. Joh. 3. 16. If he tempt us to the love of the world, and to the service of this unrighteous mammon, let us answer him that it is impossible to serve two masters of such contrary dispositions, as it is written, Matth. 6. 24.

If we love the world, the love of the father abideth not in us, 1 *John* 2. 15. That the amity of the world, is enmity against God, *James* 4. 4.

Again,

Again, if by renouncing the world, and endeavoring to serve the Lord in uprightness and in truth, he seeks to draw us from our integrity, by threatning afflictions and persecutions, we are to strengthen our selves, and resist him with the sword of the Spirit, remembring that they are blessed which suffer persecution for righteousness sake; for theirs is the Kingdom of heaven, *Matth.* 5. 10.

All that will live Godly in Christ Jesus, shall suffer persecution, 1 Tim. 3. 12.

That whosoever loseth any thing for Christs sake shall receive in recompence an hundred fold more, and have everlasting life to boot, Matth. 19. 29.

If he tempt us to the neglect of Gods word, we are to tell him that all Christs sheep hear his voice, and follow him, John 10. 27. That whosoever is of God, heareth Gods words, *John* 8. 47.

They who know God, hear his ministers, whereas he that is not of God, heareth them not, 1 John 4. 6.

Again, if he tempt us to content our selves with the bare hearing thereof, neglecting obedience thereunto, we are to tell him, that not the hearers of the word, but the doers thereof shall be justified, Rom. 2. 13.

And

And they that are hearers of the Word, and not doers also, deceive themselves, Jam. 1. 22.

Not every one that saith Lord, Lord (that is, maketh a godly profession of religion) shall enter into the Kingdom of heaven, but he that doth the will of the Father who is in heaven, Matth. 7. 21.

So when he tempteth us unto pride, we are to say unto him, Satan, I may not enter into thy temptation; for it is written, God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble, 1 Pet. 5. 5.

Thus may we repel the violence of all Satans temptations, and give him the foil, if we will take unto us the sword of the Spirit, and skilfully use the same in the fight; for it is not sufficient that we have the sword lying by us, if we do not draw it out in the dispute to fight the spiritual Combat, but let it rest in the Scabbard. It behoveth every poor Christian to come into Gods School continually, that there we may learn how to handle the sword of the Spirit, that may resist Satan in all his assaults, and give him no advantage in the fight.

Otherwise he will use it to our own overthrow, for if he durst fight with our Saviour Christ with his own weapon, the word of

God, whose knowledge was exquisite, and without measure; how much more will he be vsed in vsing it against vs, who have not attained vnto the least part of his skill? First, then hereby appeareth the carnal wretchednes of many poor soules, who as if they had no enemy to oppose them, and assault them, have not this weapon in their houses at all, and if they have, yet they bestow more time in prophane exercises, then in study how to vse this sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God, for their own defence, and too many trusting to their own skill as sufficient in it self, they seldome come to the Lords School, where they may learn to vse the weapon of Gods word for their best advantage.

Secondly, hereby appeareth the wicked practices of the enemies of Gods truth, who take from Gods people, the sword of the Spirit, which the Lord hath given vnto all for their defence.

Neither doth the Apostle exhort onely Ministers to take this weapon, but all Christians whatsoever, who are assaulted with their spiritual enemies.

The last, and chief means whereby we may both defend our selves, and offend our enemies; is fervent and effectual prayer.

which the Apostle exhorteth us to, Ephes. 6. 18.

And pray alwaies: the necessity and profit of which exercise, is very great in this spiritual Combat; because thereby we do obtain all our strength to fight, and victory also over our enemies.

For first, we cannot indure the least assault of Satan by our strength, unless we be armed with the power of Gods might, and the Lords assistance, whereby onely we can overcome, is obtained by earnest and effectual prayer, Psal. 50. 15. Call upon me in the day of trouble; so will I deliver thee, and thou shalt glorifie me. And our Saviour prescribeth us the means to free our selves from temptation, or at least, from being overcome by it, that we crave the Lords assistance, saying, Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil, Matth. 6. 13. so he exhorteth his Disciples unto prayer, lest they should enter into temptation, Luke 22. 40. 46.

Secondly, we cannot obtain the spiritual armour (before described) by any means of our own, and therefore are to be begged at his hands, by earnest and effectual prayer, we having his gracious promise, that if we ask, we shall receive, Matth. 7. 7. And our

Savior

Saviour hath assured us, that whatsoever we ask the Father in his name, he will give it us, John 16. 23. And to this his promise he addeth his commandment in the verse following, Ask and ye shall receive, vers. 24.

Now that our prayers may be effectual, there are divers conditions and properties required in them.

1. That we pray continually, which our Saviour Christ injoyneth, Luke 18. 1. Not that we must neglect all other duties, and do nothing but pray, for there is a time to hear the word, to do the works of mercy, and of our callings: but his meaning is, that we be alwaies ready to pray upon all good occasions, especially in the time of temptation.

2. The second thing required, is, that we pray with all manner of prayer and supplication, that is, when we want any thing that is good, or would be delivered from any thing that is evil, we must have recourse to God by prayer, that we may obtain the one, and avoid the other; but more especially when we feel the want or weakness of our spiritual armour, we are then to beg the graces of Gods spirit, we are to beg them at Gods hand, that so we may be able to withstand the encounter.

The third thing required, is that we pray in, or by the Spirit.

The words may be taken both waies.

First, therefore we must pray in the Spirit, which is required that we pray with understanding.

2. We must pray with attentive minds, joyning our hearts with our lips.

3. We must pray with a pure conscience, and faith unfained, lifting up pure hands to God without wrath or doubting, 1 Tim. 2. 8.

Thus have I described the Christian armour, which every man is to put on before he enter into the Combat, with our spiritual enemies, if we resist Satan he will flie from us, Jam. 4. 7. but if we give ground and betake our selves to flight, he will pursue us swiftly, and deadly wound us, for we have no armour on the back, to defend us from the violence of his blows, neither will the Lord protect such faint-hearted cowards as run away from his standard, not daring to trust and relye upon his mighty power, and never failing assistance, which he hath promised to all that fight his Battel. Seeing therefore there is no safety in flight, but assured victory to them that faint not, but endure the brunt of the battel, let us man-

manfully stand upon our guard, neither flying nor yielding to our spiritual enemies; for where can we be more safe, then under the Lords Standard? where can we be more honourably imployed, then in fighting his Battel? how can our state be more dangerous then when we flye and Satan pursueth us? how can it be more desperate then when we yield our selves captive to Satan, to be bound in the fetters of sin, until the sentence of condemnation be pronounced on us, in the general Sessions at the day of Christs appearing? From the which sad sentence the Lord of his tender mercies, grant that every poor soul of us may be delivered.

Thus having given you an account of our spiritual armour, and laid down the reason to incourage you to fight this spiritual warfare: I now come to give you some motives to stir you up to this work, that we should not set our hearts on this world and worldly things, because we are but Pilgrims and strangers here on earth; as appeareth by the acknowledgement of the Saints and Servants of God, in times of old; of whom it is said, that they confest they were Pilgrims and Strangers on the earth, *Heb.* 11. 13. the which as it is manifest by the Scri-

pture, so it is demonstrated by evident reason: for that is to be esteemed a mans country, where his chief friends and kindred remains, where his living, and substance doth lie, where he is to spend the most part of his life; where he hath most contentment, and best entertainment: but the faithful have all their kindred in heaven, saving some few who are pilgrims with them on the earth, there is their heavenly Father, and Christ Jesus their elder brother, there are their chief treasures, even an inheritance undefiled that fadeth not away: finally there they have best entertainment, and most contentment: because there all tears shall be wiped from their eyes, and therethey shall have mansion-houses, inheritances, crowns of glory, and fulnesse of joy for evermore.

Now from this consideration, that we are not in our own country, but remain upon the earth as pilgrims and strangers, should serve as an effectual reason to wean our hearts from the love of the world and worldly vanities, and to place them in heaven, and onely in heavenly joys, which is our country, and place of residence: therefore if we be pilgrims on earth, we must follow their practice, and not set our hearts on worldly things: because the time we have to

enjoy

enjoy them is very short, let him that hath enjoyed worldly prosperity the longest time, look back, and he shall see that all that is past is but as a dream, or shadow, and as the twinkling of an eye, in respect of eternity: but all our love and longing must be placed on our heavenly inheritance, where we are for ever to enjoy an eternal weight of glory and happiness without end.

Now if we would thus esteem of the world and worldly vanities, learn then of the (Apostle) to use them as though we used them not, not as places to rest in, or things wherein we take our chief repose; but as a way to travel in, and as necessaries to further us in our journey: who would set his heart and affections on those delights which he seeth as he passeth by? who in his right wits will so doat on these things in which he hath not any interest, as that he should neglect far better and permanent delights in his own country?

Let us then like travellers refresh our selves with the things of this life; and so again go forward on our journy, cast away every thing that presseth down, and the sin that hangeth fast on, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us: let us learn to imitate the Eagle, which seldome

lighteth on the earth, but when constrain'd with hunger, she stoopeth to her prey, and when she hath fed, mounteth again aloft above the clouds: so let us not suffer our hearts and affections any longer to rest upon the earth, then we are compel'd with our present necessities, but like the Eaglets of Jesus Christ, let us resort thither where the dead carcase is, and being fed herewith, let us amount high in divine contemplations, having our conversation in heaven, and let us like strangers and pilgrims abstain from carnal lusts, which fight against our souls.

Again, the world is not simply a place of pilgrimage alone, but a place of warfare, wherein we are assaulted on all sides, and by all possible means, hindred in our spiritual voyage, and therefore seeing our time is but short, and so full of trouble, let us seat our affections, and our hearts on the main business which tends to our spiritual warfare; as Jacob saith, the daies of his pilgrimage were not onely few but evil also, Gen. 47 9. and Job affirmeth, that man who is born of a woman is but of short continuance, and full of trouble, Job 14. 1. And therefore while we are here we had need to be always in the compleat armour of a Christian, be-

cause

cause we fight not onely against flesh and blood, but against Principalities, Powers, and worldly Governours, the Prince of the darkness of the world, which are in high places, let us then with the Apostle, so run that we may obtain, 1 Cor. 9. 24, 25.

Let us, being to wrestle with such mighty enemies, like him that proveth masteries, abstain from all things which might hinder us to obtain a crown is incorruptible, let us come into the field against our spiritual enemies, not loaded and incumbred with the burden of worldly trash, tyed fast unto us the bounds of carnal love, which shall but betray us into the hands of those foes which seek our overthrow, but let us run armed with Gods spiritual graces, and assisted with the power of his might whereby we shall be inabled to obtain the victory, that so we may say with the Apostle, I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, and have kept the faith, from henceforth is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge shall give me at that day, 2 Tim. 4. 7, 8. Seeing this is promised, as he affirmeth, not to him alone, but to all them who obtain the victory in this spiritual warfare, according to that gracious promise, in Revel. 3. 27. to him that overcometh will

I grant to sit with me in my Throne, even as I overcame, and sit with my Father in his Throne.

I come now to a second motive, to stir us up to look after heavenly treasure, and not immoderately to love the world, and worldly vanities, because we are pilgrims here, and therefore must leave them in our passage, for we are Citizens of heaven, the new Jerusalem: the Apostle saith, we having through Christ an entrance unto the father by one spirit, are now no more strangers and forreigners, but Citizens with the Saints, and of the houshold of God: and speaking of Abraham the father of the faithful, he saith, That he abode in the land of promise, as in a strange country, and as one that dwelt in tents, because he looked for a City not made with hands, having a foundation whose builder and maker is God; neither was this peculiar to him alone, but general to all his Children, who followed him in the faith: of whom it is said, that they have here no continuing City, but seek one to come, *Heb.* 11. 6, 9, 10. And the reason is apparent, for we are Citizens, and subjects of that Kingdom, whereof our Lord Jesus Christ is King, but he himself hath plainly told us, that his kingdom is not of this world, but that he reigneth

reigneth and ruleth in that kingdom of eternal glory; and therefore whosoever are subjects unto him, they cannot be free denizons of the world, but Citizens of heaven.

It is no marvel that heretofore we living in ignorance, did not esteem of those divine excellencies, but preferred before them these worldly vanities: because they are subject to our selves, for there is no desire of that which is not known, and that bright sunshine day is all alike to him, who is stark-blind unto the darkest night. But now after that the grace of God which bringeth salvation unto all men, hath appeared, and taught us that we should deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, and that we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world, looking for the blessed hope and appearing of the glory of the mighty God, and of our Saviour Jesus Christ. Titus 2. 11, 12, 13.

It were more then madness, if we should suffer our selves still to be transported with worldly concupiscence, and prefer the present satisfying of our carnal desires before the eternal fruition of our heavenly joys: we should not be alwayes children wanting wit and experience in heavenly affairs, it is time now to put away childish things.

Whilst

Whilst we remain'd in the state of slaves, and were the devoted vassals of sin and Satan, our base desires did well agree with our base condition, whilst we were Citizens of the world, and children of the earth, it might suite with our calling to desire earthly comodities, and esteem the riches, pleasures, and preferments of the place whereof we were inhabitants at high rates, but now that God hath dignified us with most royal priviledges, and made us Citizens of heaven; and of the slaves of Satan, hath made us his own children by adoption and grace, yea heirs apparent of his glorious kingdom: O let us, remembring this high calling, for shame forsake our base desires, not suffering our hearts to lie groveling on the earth, wallowing in carnal pleasures, and worldly delights, but raising them up to the height of our hopes, let us aim at no less then crowns and kingdoms, and those not momentary, and of this world, seeing they are vain and of little worth, but those which are most glorious and eternal in the world to come.

Having shewed you the priviledges of the Citizens of heaven, I shall now give you a hint of those ineffable and inconceivable joys of heaven: the Apostle St. Paul seems to intimate that he was taken up into paradice;

2 Cor.

2 Cor. 12. 41. That we may have some glimps of the glory, we are to know that the joys of heaven, is nothing else but that chief happiness and supreme felicity, which the holy Saints having served God in this life, shall eternally injoy with God himself, and his son Christ, in the life to come: the joys of heaven are called a torrent of pleasures, a timely fountain, a majestical temple; it is called a Crown, a Crown of righteousness, and lest it should be like the worldly crowns that fade away and subject to change, it is a crown incorruptible, which cannot be taken from us, a crown of life that cannot be lost by death: yea it is called glory it self. Thus the ravishing joys of heaven are plainly noted by those titles and similitudes, which are in the word of God ascribed to it; and it is further denoted by way of a mansion, a dwelling house we are to remain in, and not onely so, but an inheritance that is immortal, and undefiled, that passeth not away, an incorruptible crown, which cannot perish: a fountain of life, which is never dry, an eternal life which hath no end.

A Kingdom which cannot be shaken by any violence, and eternal glory that hath no limits nor end. And thus we see in part the excellency of those heavenly joys: There are two parts of those joys. 1 The

1. The ablence of all evil.

2. The presence of all good: we shal have a freedome from all evils that may trouble us, and have the fruition of all those things that can delight and comfort us.

Here we are content to injoy the victory over all flesh and blood: this is the blessed conquest, this is the eternal mansion of glory, for which so many of the Saints and holy Martyrs of God have fought manfully under Christs Banner, and have been found more then conquerors through Christ that loved them. Let us therefore so strive and fight, that we may obtain a glorious conquest over the spirtual enemies of our Salvation, and so obtain the crown of Victory, which God hath promised us; even that glorious felicity, the eternal happiness of his heavenly kingdom, the which if it be the blessed will of Jesus Christ the righteous to grant us, who hath dearly bought it for us, to whom with the Father, and his holy Spirit be ascribed to him, by all his Church, all honor, glory, praise, and thanksgiving, obedience, and dominion, henceforth and for evermore.

Amen.

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